

# **Fiscal Services Division**

## **Legislative Services Agency**

### **Fiscal Note**

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SF 332 - Mental Health Advocates (LSB 1326 SV)

Analyst: Jennifer Acton (Phone: (515) 281-7846) (jennifer.acton@legis.state.ia.us)

Fiscal Note Version - New

Requestor: Senator Maggie Tinsman

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#### **Description**

Senate File 332 provides for district court appointment and Judicial Branch compensation of all patient advocates for persons who have been hospitalized for mental illness. Under current law, the district court appoints the advocate in counties with a population of less than 300,000 and in counties with a population greater than 300,000, the county board of supervisors appoints the advocate. In both situations, the compensation for patient advocates is currently paid by the county. Patient advocates appointed under provisions of this Bill become employees of the Judicial Branch and will be compensated by the State.

#### **Background**

1. In calendar year 2004, there were 6,368 filings concerning Chapter 229, Code of Iowa, (Hospitalization of Persons with Mental Illness).
2. An advocate spends approximately three hours per case. The rate of pay for an advocate ranges from \$10 an hour to \$31 an hour.

#### **Assumptions**

1. This estimate assumes a rate of pay for a mental health advocate of \$24.40 per hour, including benefits (\$20.00 per hour plus 22% benefits).
2. The Judicial Branch reimburses travel expenses. This estimate assumes \$5 per case.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact for SF 332 is an increase in General Fund expenses of \$498,000 for total annual compensation and travel expenses. County expenses would be reduced by a like amount.

#### **Source**

Judicial Branch

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March 15, 2005

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The fiscal note and correctional impact statement for this bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and pursuant to Section 2.56, Code of Iowa. Data used in developing this fiscal note and correctional impact statement are available from the Fiscal Services Division, Legislative Services Agency to members of the Legislature upon request.

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